



BILLING CODE 8011-01p

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Release No. 34-90256; File No. SR-Phlx-2020-48]

Self-Regulatory Organizations; Nasdaq PHLX LLC; Notice of Filing and Immediate Effectiveness of Proposed Rule Change to Extend the Exchange's Nonstandard Expirations Pilot Program

October 22, 2020

Pursuant to Section 19(b)(1) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (the “Act”),¹ and Rule 19b-4 thereunder,² notice is hereby given that on October 14, 2020, Nasdaq PHLX LLC (“Phlx” or “Exchange”) filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (“Commission”) the proposed rule change as described in Items I and II below, which Items have been prepared by the Exchange. The Commission is publishing this notice to solicit comments on the proposed rule change from interested persons.

I. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement of the Terms of Substance of the Proposed Rule Change

A proposal to extend the pilot period for the Exchange's nonstandard expirations pilot program, currently set to expire on November 2, 2020.

¹ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(1).

² 17 CFR 240.19b-4.

The text of the proposed rule change is available on the Exchange's Website at <https://listingcenter.nasdaq.com/rulebook/phlx/rules>, at the principal office of the Exchange, and at the Commission's Public Reference Room.

II. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement of the Purpose of, and Statutory Basis for, the Proposed Rule Change

In its filing with the Commission, the Exchange included statements concerning the purpose of and basis for the proposed rule change and discussed any comments it received on the proposed rule change. The text of these statements may be examined at the places specified in Item IV below. The Exchange has prepared summaries, set forth in sections A, B, and C below, of the most significant aspects of such statements.

A. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement of the Purpose of, and Statutory Basis for, the Proposed Rule Change

1. Purpose

On December 15, 2017, the Commission approved a proposed rule change for the listing and trading on the Exchange, on a twelve month pilot basis, of p.m.-settled options on broad-based indexes with nonstandard expirations dates.³ The pilot program permits both Weekly Expirations and End of Month ("EOM") expirations similar to those of the a.m.-settled broad-based index options, except that the exercise settlement value of the options subject to the pilot are based on the index value derived from the closing prices of component stocks. This pilot was extended various times and is currently extended through November 2, 2020.

³ See Securities Exchange Act Release No. 82341 (December 15, 2017), 82 FR 60651 (December 21, 2017) (approving SR-Phlx-2017-79) (Order Approving a Proposed Rule Change, as Modified by Amendment No. 1 and Granting Accelerated Approval of Amendment No. 2, of a Proposed Rule Change To Establish a Nonstandard Expirations Pilot Program).

Pursuant to Phlx Options 4A, Section 12(b)(5)(A) the Exchange may open for trading Weekly Expirations on any broad-based index eligible for standard options trading to expire on any Monday, Wednesday, or Friday (other than the third Friday-of-the-month or days that coincide with an EOM expiration). Weekly Expirations are subject to all provisions of Options 4A, Section 12 and are treated the same as options on the same underlying index that expire on the third Friday of the expiration month. Unlike the standard monthly options, however, Weekly Expirations are p.m.-settled.

Similarly, pursuant to Options 4A, Section 12(b)(5)(B) the Exchange may open for trading EOM expirations on any broad-based index eligible for standard options trading to expire on the last trading day of the month. EOM expirations are subject to all provisions of Options 4A, Section 12 and treated the same as options on the same underlying index that expire on the third Friday of the expiration month. However, the EOM expirations are p.m.-settled.

The Exchange now proposes to amend Options 4A, Section 12(b)(5)(C) so that the duration of the pilot program for these nonstandard expirations will be through May 4, 2021. The Exchange continues to have sufficient systems capacity to handle p.m.-settled options on broad-based indexes with nonstandard expirations dates and has not encountered any issues or adverse market effects as a result of listing them. Additionally, there is continued investor interest in these products. The Exchange will continue to make public on its website any data and analysis it submits to the Commission under the pilot program.

The Exchange will be submitting a rule change to request that the pilot program become permanent. In lieu of submitting any additional annual reports, the Exchange would

provide additional information requested by the Commission in connection with the permanency rule change for this pilot program.

2. Statutory Basis

The Exchange believes that its proposal is consistent with Section 6(b) of the Act,⁴ in general, and furthers the objectives of Section 6(b)(5) of the Act,⁵ in particular, in that it is designed to promote just and equitable principles of trade, to remove impediments to and perfect the mechanism of a free and open market and a national market system, and, in general to protect investors and the public interest. The Exchange believes the proposed rule change will protect investors and the public interest by providing the Exchange, the Commission and investors the benefit of additional time to analyze nonstandard expiration options. By extending the pilot program, investors may continue to benefit from a wider array of investment opportunities. Additionally, both the Exchange and the Commission may continue to monitor the potential for adverse market effects of p.m.-settlement on the market, including the underlying cash equities market, at the expiration of these options.

B. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement on Burden on Competition

The Exchange does not believe that the proposed rule change will impose any burden on competition not necessary or appropriate in furtherance of the purposes of the Act. Options with nonstandard expirations would be available for trading to all market participants.

⁴ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b).

⁵ 15 U.S.C. 78f(b)(5).

C. Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement on Comments on the Proposed Rule Change Received from Members, Participants, or Others

No written comments were either solicited or received.

III. Date of Effectiveness of the Proposed Rule Change and Timing for Commission Action

Because the proposed rule change does not: (i) Significantly affect the protection of investors or the public interest; (ii) impose any significant burden on competition; and (iii) become operative for 30 days from the date on which it was filed, or such shorter time as the Commission may designate, it has become effective pursuant to Section 19(b)(3)(A) of the Act⁶ and subparagraph (f)(6) of Rule 19b-4 thereunder.⁷

A proposed rule change filed pursuant to Rule 19b-4(f)(6) under the Act⁸ normally does not become operative for 30 days after the date of its filing. However, Rule 19b-4(f)(6)(iii)⁹ permits the Commission to designate a shorter time if such action is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest. The Exchange has asked the Commission to waive the 30-day operative delay so that investors may continue to trade nonstandard expiration options listed by the Exchange as part of the pilot program on an uninterrupted basis. The Commission believes that waiving the 30-day operative delay is consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest as

⁶ 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(3)(A).

⁷ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6). In addition, Rule 19b-4(f)(6)(iii) requires a self-regulatory organization to give the Commission written notice of its intent to file the proposed rule change, along with a brief description and text of the proposed rule change, at least five business days prior to the date of filing of the proposed rule change, or such shorter time as designated by the Commission. The Exchange has satisfied this requirement.

⁸ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6).

⁹ 17 CFR 240.19b-4(f)(6)(iii).

it will allow the pilot program to continue uninterrupted, thereby avoiding investor confusion that could result from a temporary interruption in the pilot program. Accordingly, the Commission hereby waives the operative delay and designates the proposed rule change operative upon filing.¹⁰

At any time within 60 days of the filing of the proposed rule change, the Commission summarily may temporarily suspend such rule change if it appears to the Commission that such action is necessary or appropriate in the public interest, for the protection of investors, or otherwise in furtherance of the purposes of the Act. If the Commission takes such action, the Commission shall institute proceedings to determine whether the proposed rule change should be approved or disapproved.

IV. Solicitation of Comments

Interested persons are invited to submit written data, views, and arguments concerning the foregoing, including whether the proposed rule change is consistent with the Act. Comments may be submitted by any of the following methods:

Electronic comments:

- Use the Commission's Internet comment form (<http://www.sec.gov/rules/sro.shtml>); or
- Send an e-mail to rule-comments@sec.gov. Please include File Number SR-Phlx-2020-48 on the subject line.

¹⁰ For purposes only of waiving the 30-day operative delay, the Commission also has considered the proposed rule's impact on efficiency, competition, and capital formation. See 15 U.S.C. 78c(f).

Paper comments:

- Send paper comments in triplicate to Secretary, Securities and Exchange

Commission, 100 F Street, NE, Washington, DC 20549-1090.

All submissions should refer to File Number SR-Phlx-2020-48. This file number should be included on the subject line if e-mail is used. To help the Commission process and review your comments more efficiently, please use only one method. The Commission will post all comments on the Commission's Internet website

(<http://www.sec.gov/rules/sro.shtml>). Copies of the submission, all subsequent amendments, all written statements with respect to the proposed rule change that are filed with the Commission, and all written communications relating to the proposed rule change between the Commission and any person, other than those that may be withheld from the public in accordance with the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552, will be available for website viewing and printing in the Commission's Public Reference Room, 100 F Street, NE, Washington, DC 20549 on official business days between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Copies of the filing also will be available for inspection and copying at the principal office of the Exchange. All comments received will be posted without change. Persons submitting comments are cautioned that we do not redact or edit personal identifying information from comment submissions. You should submit only information that you wish to make available publicly. All submissions should refer to File Number SR-Phlx-2020-48, and should be submitted on or before **[INSERT DATE 21 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

For the Commission, by the Division of Trading and Markets, pursuant to delegated authority.¹¹

J. Matthew DeLesDernier,

Assistant Secretary.

[FR Doc. 2020-23800 Filed: 10/27/2020 8:45 am; Publication Date: 10/28/2020]

¹¹ 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12).